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INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 4588
RUEHQP/AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE 1739
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE 1732
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 1006
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1372
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 0627
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0768
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 0675
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0626
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0720
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PESHAWAR 000009

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/13/2019

TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: NWFP: ATTACK ON PAKISTAN SECURITY FORCES IN MOHMAND BY
MILITANTS ENTERING FROM AFGHANISTAN

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, Peshawar,
Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

Summary

1. (C) In an unprecedented move by militants, at least 200 fighters crossed the border from Afghanistan into Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and attacked a paramilitary base of the Frontier Corps the evening of January 10. Government forces responded to the assault with helicopter gunships and F-16 bombing runs which, according to Frontier Corps personnel, drove the militants back towards the border with Afghanistan. Narcotic Affairs Section (NAS) helicopters and one Cessna Caravan flew four missions with their Pakistan crews to the besieged troops, evacuated eight casualties and performed reconnaissance.

2. (C) According to 11th Corps, winter snowfall had been expected to keep operations in Bajaur and Mohmand relatively low for several weeks. While it may be too soon to tell if this attack signals a change in strategy of the militants, it is clear that security forces are having to react to something they have not seen before--sizeable forces of militants entering from Afghanistan attacking Pakistan security forces. End Summary.

Militants Attack From Afghanistan

3. (C) In an unprecedented move by militants, at least 200 fighters crossed the border from Afghanistan into Mohmand Agency of the FATA and attacked a paramilitary base of the Frontier Corps the evening of January 10. According to Major General Amjad, Pakistan's Director of Military Operations, the militants were Mehsud tribesman crossing from Waziristan through Afghanistan and back into Pakistan. The resulting combat left 50 militants and six Frontier Corps personnel dead, 16 wounded and six missing.

Government Response

4. (C) Government forces responded to the assault with helicopter gunships and F-16 bombing runs which, according to Frontier Corps personnel, drove the militants back towards the

border with Afghanistan. Scattered skirmishes continued into January 12.

NAS Air Wing Supports FC During Attack

15. (SBU) Narcotic Affairs Section (NAS) helicopters and one Cessna Caravan flew four missions with their Pakistan crews to the besieged troops and evacuated eight casualties. Additionally, they performed reconnaissance and located militant forces whom were subsequently engaged by the helicopter gunships. The crews of the NAS aircraft did not report being fired upon at anytime and the aircraft did not sustain any hits or damage.

Lull In Fighting?

16. (C) The attack near Mamad Gatt, Mohmand Agency came after a lull in fighting in both Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies. (Note: Mamad Gatt is approximately 4 miles from the border and 2 miles northeast of Mandurail. End note.) According to 11th Corps, winter snowfall had been expected to keep operations in Bajaur and Mohmand relatively low for several weeks.

17. (C) Pakistan Security Forces began an air campaign in mid December in preparation for a yet to be launched ground campaign in Mohmand. In nearby Bajaur Agency to the north of Mohmand, a ground campaign has been ongoing since August. This included some of the heaviest fighting seen in years and reports that some militants fled into adjacent agencies including Mohmand.

Comment

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18. (C) This is the first time in post's memory, that a militant force of significant size has crossed into Pakistan to attack GOP security elements. With the exception of operations in Bajaur, where militants directly attacked Pakistan military forces at Loisar and Kar, militants have usually scattered upon arrival of government security forces. It is too soon to tell if this attack signals a change in militant strategy to use forces entering from Afghanistan to attack into Pakistan or simply reflects a determination to hold onto Mohmand as a staging area for operations across the border.

TRACY